

# Regionalism in Transportation Planning

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# How Important Is It?

- IMMENSELY
- FUNDAMENTALLY
- UNEQUIVOCALLY

***Show me a state road that ends at municipal boundary***

***Show me a functional rail line that exists wholly in one city.***

***Why aren't there airports in every community; or sea ports in every coastal town?***

***Why aren't there hospitals, universities, big-box stores or car-washes in every town?***

# Structure

- Required By Law or Regulation
  - Metropolitan Planning Organizations
  - Regional Transportation Advisory Committees
- May be used by DOT
  - Regional Planning Agencies
  - Corridor Committees

# Metropolitan Planning Organizations

- Required by Federal Regulation for “metro” areas with aggregate population of 50,000+
- Provided 1% of total Federal Allocation from certain funding categories
- Provided a proportion of DOT’s capital program by a formula (population, vehicle miles traveled, miles of highway)
- Responsible for
  - Developing a long range transportation plan
  - Conducting Transportation Planning studies in MPO
  - Selecting capital projects for DOT to fund in MPO

# Maine's MPOs

- BACTS –
  - Bangor, Brewer, Old Town, Orono, Hamden, Veazie
  - PLUS (new) *parts of Milford, Bradley, Eddington and Orrington*
- ATRC –
  - Lewiston, Auburn, Lisbon and Sabattus
- KACTS –
  - Kittery, Eliot, South Berwick, Berwick and Lebanon
- PACTS –
  - Portland, South Portland, Scarborough, Cape Elizabeth, Gorham, Westbrook, Falmouth
  - PLUS (new) *Saco, Old Orchard Beach, Biddeford, Windham, Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Freeport and Cumberland*



# Regional Transportation Advisory Committees

- Required by Sensible Transportation Policy Act (STPA) for all areas outside MPOs
  - Federal DOT Planning rules also require public involvement but is not specific as to how
- Responsible for
  - Advising DOT on its public involvement efforts
  - Advising DOT on policy, program initiatives for 6 & 20 year plans
  - Advising DOT on substantial public interest projects or significant highway projects
  - Developing a regional advisory report

# Regional Planning Agencies

- STPA rule states that MaineDOT may seek assistance from Regional Planning Agencies to administer RTAC process
  - MaineDOT contracts with RPC's
  - RPC's are
    - Principal drafters of RTAC Regional Advisory Reports
    - Involved in developing Department's 6 yr and 20 yr plans
    - Involved in municipal outreach
    - Involved in corridor studies & other transportation related efforts in their respective regions

# Corridor Planning Committees

- Generally, “Highway” based corridors
- Examples include: Route 302, Route 26, Route 9, Route 1, Route 201 etc.
- Usually
  - multi-municipal; multi stakeholder
  - focused on highway improvement priorities (intersection needs, safety improvements, reconstruction priorities)
- Some are focused on
  - Scenic Byway planning
  - Rail Corridor Planning
  - Beginning to focus on land use link



# Recent Transportation Planning Initiatives

- Include consideration of
  - Land use standards that impact transportation system & vice-versa
  - Multimodal system needs

*The location, nature and design of land use activities have direct implications on the functionality of the transportation system and vice-versa.*

*Without hand-in-hand consideration, first one system suffers; usually, later, the other suffers.*

*This new DOT direction causes a point of tension because it challenges local Home Rule!*

# New Regional Transportation and Land Use Planning Initiatives

- PV Pilot
- “Gateway 1”
- PACTS Land Use Policy

# PV Pilot

- \$150,000 TCSP Grant by FHWA to DOT to develop *Regionally Coordinated Capital Investment Plan*
  - **Linking transportation and land use impacts**
- Grant passed on to BACTS in partnership with PVCOG
- Involved BACTS communities & first tier towns outside BACTS area
  - Focused on education, dialogue & brainstorming around issues of inter-local cooperation
  - Identified numerous opportunities for joint planning, investment, purchase, training, & other resource sharing
- Effort still underway; interest is expanding
- Limitations:
  - Funding is limited to planning and runs out
  - Effort has no Authority; success rests with local “will”

# "Gateway 1"

- About to be launched with RTAC 5 and SPO
- Mid-Coast Route 1 corridor preservation strategic plan – *Brunswick to Ellsworth*
- Transportation Needs
- Community and Economic Development Needs
- "Resource" Protection Needs
- Coordinated investment & land use management strategies

*Gateway 1 communities are inter-dependent and can contribute to one another's success or demise.*

*Very unlikely that new long-distance high speed highway will be built to provide access to Maine's mid-coast.*

*Use of best management practices by all concerned is the only viable choice!*



# PACTS Land Use Policy

- Initiated by PACTS Planning Committee
- Concept links transportation project **selection and funding** to land use standards at local or multi-municipal levels
- Affects arterial highway **projects** that shorten travel times (i.e. tend to induce sprawl)
- Host community(ies) would be required to have “in place” land use plans that minimize/mitigate potential out-migration before funding assigned
- Concept endorsed; details to be fleshed out



# Barriers to Regional Planning Efforts

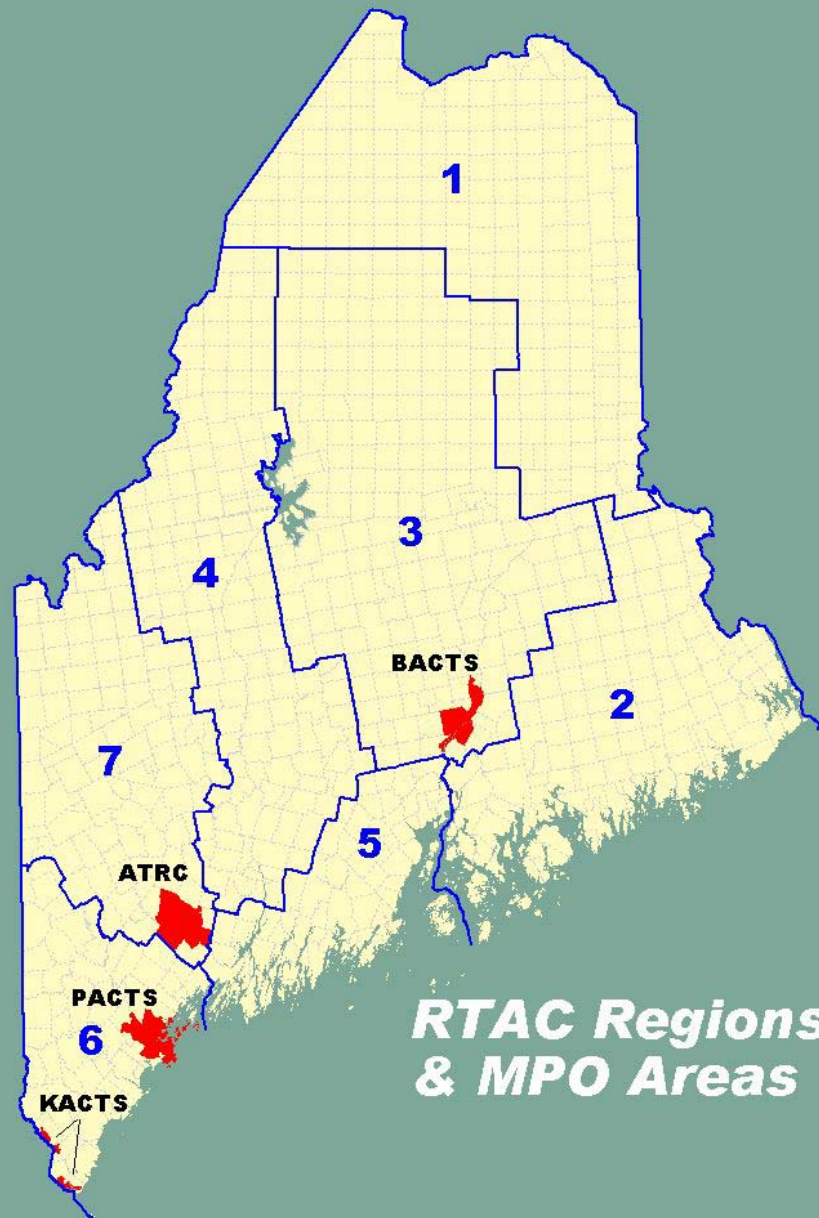
- Regional Planning Agencies are authorized to coordinate local/state issues but have **NO**
  - dedicated funding source with which to operate in accordance with enabling legislation
  - authority/funding source to create regional planning incentives
  - authority to intervene either at the state or local level when one entity is proposing actions that detrimentally affect the other

# Barriers to Regional Planning Efforts

- Regional boundaries vary widely based on focus area
  - RTAC, MaineDOT Maintenance Divisions, School Districts, Watershed areas, Counties etc.
  - Makes for complex regional delivery system

# Barriers to Regional Planning Efforts

- Regional boundaries were set at a time when demographics were more stable;
  - demographic changes are moving targets;
  - regional structure has no authority to manage/affect those changes
    - **Unlike MPOs whose boundaries adjust with census**
- Geographic size may be too big / diverse
  - Labor Market dynamics often more concentrated
  - How can Augusta relate to Bingham and vice versa?



***RTAC Regions  
& MPO Areas***



# Barriers to Regional Planning Efforts

- Regions exist by virtue of voluntary “membership”
  - Dues based system makes RPC’s vulnerable to variety of factors
- Land use authority is vested with individual communities
  - they are not accountable for the impact of their decisions on any other entity
  - parochial rather than regional thinking often prevails!